

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD  
COOPERATION WITH  
THE  
AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS  
IN DISASTER RELIEF

I. PURPOSE

To define the cooperative relationship existing between the United States Coast Guard and the American National Red Cross in time of disaster and establish general guidance for its Implementation.

II. DEFINITION OF DISASTER

A disaster is an occurrence such as hurricane, tornado, storm, flood, high water, wind-driven water, tidal wave, earthquake, drought, blizzard, pestilence, famine, fire, explosion, building collapse, transportation wreck, or other situation that causes human suffering or creates human needs that the victims cannot alleviate without assistance.

III. SCOPE

The term "disaster" as used herein applies only to natural disasters within the United States as mentioned in "Definition" and not to those caused by enemy attack or the threat thereof.

IV. POLICY

A. The Red Cross Disaster Program, as defined by the organization's operational procedures, mitigates suffering by meeting the urgent needs of victims and emergency workers immediately after a disaster has struck or in advance of a potential disaster. This Red Cross help includes food, clothing, shelter, first aid, and other basic elements for comfort and survival. Such help may be provided to large numbers of people in Red Cross operated shelters, at either fixed or mobile Red Cross feeding stations, or at Red Cross emergency first aid stations, or it may be provided as individualized assistance to families who are able to live temporarily elsewhere. Such help to individual families may include not only the types of assistance listed above but also other urgently needed items that will help them to resume normal living patterns as quickly as possible. Families in Red Cross shelters are assisted in moving back to their homes, or to alternate homes if their own are untenable, as quickly as possible.

Arrangements are made for those victims who need additional to receive that care at the nearest available medical facility. the Red Cross augments local medical personnel and equipment and blood and blood products.

The Red Cross handles welfare inquiries from concerned families outside the disaster area.

The Red Cross also helps disaster victims needing long-term recovery assistance by advising and counseling them on the availability of resources so that they can resume living in keeping with acceptable standards of health, safety, and human dignity. Such resources include those of their own family as well as of federal, state, and local agencies -

public and private with disaster loan or grant programs or with sustaining programs that would benefit the victims. Also, if there are no other resources available, the Red Cross may provide direct additional assistance to enable the victims to re-establish themselves.

Red Cross disaster responsibilities, as defined above, are nationwide. Therefore, when the divisions and chapters in the affected areas are unable to meet the needs of disaster victims, the resources of the total organization are made available.

All disaster assistance from the Red Cross is based on verified disaster caused need, and is an outright grant.

- B. The United States Coast Guard has traditionally rendered aid and assistance and supplemented the efforts and resources of State and local governments and the American National Red Cross in mitigating and alleviating the human misery of distressed persons imperiled by disasters. Commensurate with the gravity of the situation and the facilities available, the Coast Guard performs the necessary acts to rescue, protect, and save persons and property thus endangered, and cooperates fully with duly constituted civil and military authorities and the American National Red Cross.

## V. AUTHORITY FOR AND LEGAL STATUS

### A. RED CROSS DISASTER SERVICES

The authority under which the American National Red Cross undertakes activities for the relief of persons suffering from disaster is stated in the following provision of its Charter enacted by the U.S. Congress on January 5, 1905, (36 U.S.C. 5):

to continue and carry on a system of national and international relief in time of peace and apply the same in initiating the sufferings caused by pestilence, famine, fire, floods and other great national calamities, and to devise and carry on measures for preventing the same."

The statement below, quoted from an opinion dated August 15, 1918, of the Honorable John W. Davis when he was a Solicitor General of the United States, describes in broad terms the duty and obligation of the American National Red Cross to carry out the requirements of its Congressional Charter.

"When any question arises as to the scope and activities of the American Red Cross, it must always be remembered that its Charter is not only a grant of power but an imposition of duties. The American Red Cross is a quasi-governmental organization, operating under Congressional charter, officered in part, at least, by governmental appointment, disbursing its funds under the security of a governmental audit, and designated by Presidential order for the fulfillment of certain treaty obligations into which the government has entered. It owes, therefore, to the government which it serves the distinct duty of discharging all those functions for which it was created.

"Not only is it constrained by those considerations growing out of its organic character, but there is also a moral obligation resting upon it to its membership and to the American people who have so freely and generously contributed to its support."

Status of the Red Cross under the Disaster Relief Act of 1974

The role of the Red Cross Disaster Program under federal law has been restated in federal disaster legislation through the years, most recently in the Disaster Relief Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-288), which says:

“ nothing contained in this Act shall limit or in any way affect the responsibilities of the American National Red Cross under the Act of January 51 1905 ...”

The act and subsequent executive orders delegate the responsibility for coordinating federal response to emergencies and major disasters, as declared by the President of the United States, to the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration. The FDM, in turn, has reaffirmed the role of the American National Red Cross in its published regulations and in a memorandum of understanding signed on October 12, 1973, and amended to apply to PL 93-288 on September 4, 1974.

## B. THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

The United States Coast Guard is empowered by statute to perform certain discretionary functions in the field of assistance and relief.

Title 14, USC (Section 88) states:

- “(a) In order to render aid to distressed persons . . . on or under waters over which the United States has jurisdiction and in order to render aid to persons and property imperiled by flood, the Coast Guard may:
- (1) perform any and all acts necessary to rescue and aid persons and save property;
  - (2) take charge of and protect all property saved from marine or aircraft disasters, or floods, at which the Coast Guard is present, until such property is claimed by persons legally authorized to receive it or until otherwise disposed of in accordance with law or applicable regulations, and care for bodies of those who may have perished in such catastrophes;
  - (3) furnish clothing, plies and services to food, lodging, medicines, and other necessary sup-persons succored by the Coast Guard; and .
- (b) The Coast Guard may render aid to persons and protect and save property at any time and at any place at which Coast Guard facilities and personnel are available and can be effectively utilized.”

## VI. ORGANIZATION

### A. THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS

The national headquarters of the American National Red Cross is located at 17th and D Streets, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20006. For administrative purposes, the United States is divided into four areas with each having jurisdiction covering a certain number of states. Area offices are located as follows: Eastern Area, 615 North St. Asaph Street, Alexandria,

Virginia 22314; Southeastern Area, 1955 Monroe Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30324; Midwestern Area, 10195 Corporate Square, St. Louis, Missouri 63132; Western Area, 1550 Sutter Street, San Francisco, California 94115. Each area has an administrative and field staff. Area offices report to national headquarters.

Area jurisdictions are office. Divisions are made manager at the headquarters regrouped into divisions, which report to the area up of groups of chapters, which report to a division chapter.

The chapter is the local unit of the American National Red Cross and is responsible for all local activities of the Red Cross within its territory., subject to the policies and regulations of the national organization. There are approximately 3,150 chapters in the United States, its territories and dependencies.

Each Red Cross chapter is responsible for developing a special disaster preparedness and relief organization, composed of the best-qualified and trained volunteers and staff available. Many chapters maintain radio-equipped vehicles which are immediately available for emergency use. Each chapter studies the disaster hazards of the territory and surveys local resources for personnel, equipment, and supplies, including transportation and emergency communication facilities, available for disaster relief.. It also formulates cooperative plans and procedures with local governmental agencies and private organizations for carrying on relief operations should a disaster occur. Through its nationwide organization, the American National Red Cross coordinates its total resources for utilization wherever needed any required for large disasters.

## B. THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

1. The Headquarters of the U. S. Coast Guard is located at 400 Seventh Street, S. W., Washington, D. C. 20590:

2. Coast Guard area offices are:

Atlantic Area - Governors Island, New York, New York 10004

Pacific Area - 630 Sansome Street, San Francisco, California 94126

3. Coast Guard District Offices are:

1<sup>st</sup> Coast Guard District - 150 Causeway Street, Boston, Massachusetts V2114

2<sup>nd</sup> Coast Guard District - Federal Building, 1520 Market Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63103

3<sup>rd</sup> Coast Guard District - Governors Island, New York, New York 10004

5<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District - Federal Building, 431 Crawford Street, Portsmouth, Virginia 23705

7<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District - Federal Building, 51 SW First Avenue, Miami, Florida 33130

8<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District - Customhouse, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130

9<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District - 1240 E. Ninth Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44199

11<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District - Heartwell Building, 19 Pine Avenue, Long Beach, California 90802

12<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District - 630 Sansome Street, San Francisco, California 94126

13<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District - 618 Second Avenue, Seattle, Washington 98104  
14<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District - P.O. Box 48, FPO, San Francisco, California 96610  
17<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District - FPO, Seattle, Washington 98771

4. Any Coast Guard unit, district office or area office may render or may be called upon to render assistance.
5. Action is initiated by the Coast Guard command cognizant of the disaster situation, whether unit, district, or area command.
  - a. Unit: The nearest unit begins rescue and other assistance immediately as appropriate, and notifies the district rescue coordination center of the nature, scope, and scale of the disaster.
  - b. District Rescue Coordination Center (RCC): Directs individual units as appropriate (ships, planes; etc.), and coordinates with other agencies, Federal, State, and local, governmental and private, in carrying out each one's responsibilities.
  - c. Should the disaster, catastrophe or emergency effects extend beyond the boundaries of a given Coast Guard district, or be beyond the capabilities of the local district, the area commander may assume full direction, supervision, and coordination of all activities of the several districts, and with other relief organizations.
6. Coast Guard activities will continue until the coordinating activity (on scene commander, district rescue coordination center, area rescue coordination center, or the Commandant of the Coast Guard) deems the emergency -to be over, or the mission is accomplished.
7. Coast Guard personnel are to be under the command of Coast Guard personnel at all times.

## VII. ARC - USCG COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

- A. The Red Cross National Disaster Services Office and the Coast Guard Headquarters Military Readiness Division will conduct continuing liaison and exchange information of mutual Interest regarding disaster relief preparedness measures and disaster relief activities.
- B. Appropriate staff of the Disaster Services In Red Cross area offices, division headquarters, and chapters and Coast Guard area and district commanders, whose territories are mutually encompassing, should establish continuing liaison with each other In order to:
  1. Develop cooperative disaster preparedness measures to be implemented in the event of a disaster or the threat thereof. The preparedness measures should include a plan which would permit the Red Cross and the Coast Guard to alert each other to a disaster situation or the threat thereof.

2. Effect coordinated operations and provide mutual support in the event of a disaster or the threat thereof.
3. Establish a system of communication for the expeditious exchange of information in the event of a disaster or the threat thereof.

#### VIII. MUTUAL SUPPORT

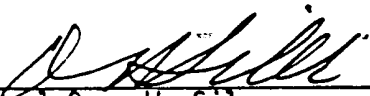
- A. The American National Red Cross recognizes the responsibility of governmental authorities for the protection of life and property, including warning, rescue and evacuation. The Red Cross does not assume responsibility for governmental functions but supports the work of governmental authorities in alleviating the distress resulting from disasters.
- B. During a domestic emergency the United States Coast Guard responds, whenever practical, to requests for support submitted by authorized Red Cross representatives. Forces not engaged in missions of greater urgency or statutory requirement may be assigned to assist the Red Cross as determined by the appropriate Coast Guard Commander. Support to the Red Cross may include but need not be limited to:
  1. Movement of Red Cross relief supplies and equipment.
  2. Movement of Red Cross disaster services personnel.
  3. Provision of watercraft and aircraft, including helicopters, for disaster relief missions and surveys.
  4. Provision of mobile communications equipment.
  5. Transmission of Red Cross emergency communications.
  6. Transportation of emergency potable water.
  7. Provision of emergency equipment and supplies for the immediate relief of distressed people.
- C. In order to meet the peculiar requirements of Flood and Disaster operations, the Commandant may direct the movement of supporting Coast Guard forces between Districts, including aerial support for survey in connection with Flood and Disaster operations in districts in which no permanent Coast Guard aviation establishment is maintained.

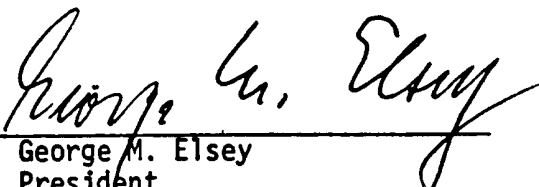
#### IX. FUNDING

- A. Normally, Coast Guard appropriations will be charged with all expenses incurred by the Coast Guard when it is engaged in disaster relief. Operating and maintenance expenses of equipment and temporary additional duty allowances of personnel of the district in which the disaster occurs shall constitute permanent charges to the appropriation Operating Expenses, Coast Guard, in accordance with usual governing instructions. In instances where normal Coast Guard resources are to support fully the efforts of the Red Cross in a and additional equipment or personnel is requested by the American National Red Cross, the Commandant inter-district transfer of the necessary equipment assist the Red Cross.

The Red Cross has agreed to reimburse the Coast Guard for the following expenses for Coast Guard personnel and equipment transported at the request of the Red Cross from other districts into the district in which the disaster occurs:

1. Transportation of equipment to and from the district in which the disaster occurs. This includes loading and unloading charges and cost of shipping.
  2. Transportation and travel costs for personnel while in a travel status.
- B. The American National Red Cross may request waiver of the payment of costs incurred by the U.S. Coast Guard in connection with items 1 and 2 of Section IX when such costs are reimbursable to the U.S. Coast Guard under the provisions of the Disaster Relief Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-288) as amended and Executive Orders issued thereunder.

  
Admiral Owen W. Siler  
Commandant  
United States Coast Guard

  
George M. Elsey  
President  
The American National Red Cross

4 April, 1975  
Date:

4 April 1975  
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